

## **Launch of Broadband Network for Thompson Valley**

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**January 28, 2010**

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### **Tazewell, Virginia**

I am pleased to return to Tazewell County this morning to join with local and Time Warner officials in launching a new broadband network that will provide high speed Internet services to more than 350 homes and businesses in the Thompson Valley area as well as to the Thompson Valley Community Center and to the fire department.

Previously, the residents of Thompson Valley did not have access to high speed Internet or cable television services. A former local cable provider recently closed its cable plant serving these residents. To address this problem, at my urging, Time Warner has constructed a 30 mile broadband network throughout Thompson Valley. As a result, the more than 350 homes and businesses in the Thompson Valley area will be able to receive high speed Internet, television and video services.

More than fifteen years ago, I encouraged local governments throughout the Ninth District to find a means of deploying broadband networks so that affordable high-speed Internet access would be available to businesses and residents throughout our region. My goal in making this recommendation was to set our region apart in comparison to other rural areas of the nation, to make us more attractive than the typical rural region to industries looking to expand their operations into new locations, and to create technology-based jobs for Southwest Virginians.

Today, I am pleased to note that many of the communities in our region are making great strides in the deployment of broadband networks, and Time Warner Cable's broadband network in Thompson Valley, which represents a \$700,000 investment in the community, is an example of the outstanding work that is being done in many of our localities. In fact, in addition to the 350 homes and businesses that will be receiving this service, Tazewell County is committed to working with Time Warner and other providers to expand the service beyond the Thompson Valley area. Time Warner Cable has also recently completed an improvement of services in Buchanan County, which is providing broadband access to more than 9000 residents in the County.

With the new broadband network, residents of Thompson Valley as well as the Thompson Valley Community Center and fire department will be able to receive affordable high speed Internet services, digital home phone services and digital cable with high definition channels and programming through Time Warner Cable. Not only will the availability of broadband services improve the quality of life for Thompson Valley residents, but it will also greatly enhance the community's economic development potential.

The new services will be provided to the Thompson Valley Community Center free of charge for one year through Time Warner Cable's "Connect a Million Minds" program. The program offers opportunities for young people to gain science, technology, engineering and math skills. Additionally, Tazewell County will be providing computers so that classes can be offered at the Community Center in basic computer skills that will both enhance Thompson Valley residents' computer literacy and prepare them for the workforce.

Just as first canals, then railroads, and then highways were the major arteries of commerce in earlier eras, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, access to broadband will be a defining feature of economic success for rural communities. Step by positive step our expanding broadband infrastructure is assuring that Southwest Virginia's communities will be at the center of economic opportunity.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize several individuals who have been instrumental in the success which we celebrate today.

I would like to thank Time Warner Cable for their commitment to expanding access to broadband services. Leslie Grayson and Rachel Welch are with us today from Time Warner Cable. Also, C.K. Allen, General Manager from Richlands' Time Warner Cable operation is with us today, and I would like to offer my thanks to him as well.

I would also like to recognize Mike Hymes, who represents Thompson Valley on the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors, for his efforts on behalf of this community.

Kathleen Allison, a Thompson Valley resident, has been tremendously helpful in organizing today's announcement, and I would like to offer my thanks to her at this time.

Finally, I would like to recognize Laura Lee, my Deputy Chief of Staff, for her persistent and persuasive efforts on behalf of the Thompson Valley community. I place a high priority in my office on obtaining successes much like the one we celebrate today, and Laura's work is vital to our efforts to deploy new broadband technology throughout Southwest Virginia.

The broadband services that are now available to Thompson Valley residents will mark a major step forward in our work to improve the quality of life for Southwest Virginia residents.

I want to commend all here for their efforts on behalf of Tazewell County residents and offer special congratulations to those who will soon benefit tremendously from the new broadband telecommunications services.